



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE PLIGHT OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

BY PERRY BELMONT.

ALTHOUGH the Democratic vote, last November, may have been more than a hundred and thirty thousand below what it was four years ago, while the total vote was larger, yet the Democratic outcome was better, so far as votes can indicate it, than in 1872, when, on account of a previous aberration on the part of a nominating National Convention, Horace Greeley had only 43.33 per cent. of the whole vote, and Grant had 55.63 per cent. McKinley had this year probably not much over 52 per cent.

I.

In considering remedies, there may be inspiration in the results obtained, after the Greeley fiasco, by members of the Manhattan Club, including among them O'Connor, Tilden and Marble. Having reformed Tammany Hall, the Democracy carried New York State in 1874 by some fifty thousand, and in 1876 chose a majority of national electors who certified in due form that Tilden had by them been chosen to be President. If the House of Representatives had stood firmly and calmly by the constitutional process of counting, as then defined by law, Tilden might have been peacefully inaugurated, and his guidance have saved the country from the coinage and currency calamities which afterward came upon it because Democrats in Congress had been bereft by Republicans of their chosen leader in the White House.

There are members of the Manhattan Club now living who stood by the Democratic reformers of that day, and by the Democratic national platform of 1876—a platform which may fairly be taken as the best modern exposition of the Democratic prin-

ciples which should be applied at Washington—and who are now ready to contribute their ripe wisdom in the present political crisis.

II.

Without such exceptional faculties and facilities as Tilden had, it is impossible to know well the political tendencies which operate throughout an area as large as is the United States. It is possible, however, to refer intelligently to the voting, during the last decade, in one Congressional District of New York situated on Long Island and Staten Island, composed of the counties of Suffolk, Queens and Richmond, which may be taken as typical of the earliest settled communities in the northeastern part of our country. Its population is partly agricultural and partly urban, gaining a livelihood on sea and land, made up of many races and religious creeds—the western portion being adjacent to cities, while the eastern retains the traces of early New England settlers. The voters are intensely patriotic and without illusions or delusions regarding silver, or gold, or greenbacks, or legal tender contrivances to defraud creditors, and they know what is honest and straightforward in the affairs of a State or of individuals.

In the district to which I refer, there were for President Democratic majorities of 3,310 in 1880; 4,455 in 1884; 2,763 in 1888, and 4,795 in 1892; whereas there were Republican majorities of 13,948 in 1896, and 3,420 in 1900.

The cause of the change in 1896 is not far to seek. It came of suspicion that the Democratic leaders were abandoning the Democratic principles of the Tilden-Marble platform of 1876. In the last Presidential campaign, the voters reduced the Republican majority of the first McKinley campaign, in the area of the old Congressional district (notwithstanding Governor Roosevelt's residence therein) from 13,948 to 3,420, because of a feeling that the perilous clouds, which four years before seemed settling over the whole land, were passing away. There was also a belief that a majority of the Kansas City Convention wished to obliterate the undemocratic declaration of 1896, and that majority would have done so, had it not been for the surviving ambitions and the delusions of two or three men, then in the places of leaders. They clung to the dead body of the fusion of 1896, a

fusion with Populists and Silver Republicans, many of whom in the extreme West subsequently voted for McKinley, and returned, or are now returning, to the Republican party from which most of them had emerged but a few years ago.

III.

From the point of view held by the American Democracy, there are two criticisms on the conduct and leadership of those who cunningly obtained possession of the Democratic machinery in 1896, and nominally retained it in 1900. Their platform and candidate proclaimed theories which were once Republican, were then defended by Populists, but were always un-Democratic. The usurpation of the Democratic name and organization accomplished at Chicago in 1896, was as furtive as it was sudden in execution. It took the Democracy unawares. It was not "openly proposed and fairly presented" in the several States, as Mr. Bryan has recently said a party revolution should be.

The aberration from the immutable principles of the American Democracy did not proceed from within, or from those whom ex-President Cleveland has recently described as "the rank and file." It was the result of an intrigue between a few leaders controlling the organization in certain States and dissatisfied Republicans, uniting with Populists who made the "capture" (that is the word used by Mr. Bryan) of the Chicago Convention. Neither New York nor the Eastern States were taken into the conspiracy.

Of the 741 delegates to the National Silver Party Convention, 526 had been Republicans, and the temporary chairman of the Populist National Convention declared in his speech that the Bryan Chicago Convention had been guilty of stealing "the People's Party platform almost entire."

After the campaign of 1896, Mr. Bryan published a book entitled "The First Battle," in which he set forth, with much minuteness, the several steps taken by those who had plotted against the traditional policy of the Democratic party. He disclosed motives and methods generally unknown at the time by Eastern Democrats. As a member of the House of Representatives, when President Cleveland urged the repeal of the destructive Sherman Silver Dollar law, Mr. Bryan led the resistance to the repeal, resorting finally to dilatory and obstructive tactics. After

those had been suppressed by a majority of the House and the repeal had been enacted, he, as he announced in his book (p. 150), went to a conference of silver men in Omaha, in June, 1894. There he proclaimed his invention of free silver coinage at "16 to 1" without waiting for the "aid or consent of any nation on earth." During the next year, and early in 1896, several other conferences, or conventions, were held in the South and West; he mentions Senators Jones and Stewart of Nevada, and other Republicans, as the "leading spirits." The avowed purpose, in the beginning, was a non-partisan movement to constrain the Republican and Democratic National Conventions to declare for free silver, and "to provide for the nomination of a silver ticket in case both failed to do so." That non-partisan scheme having encountered obstacles, another movement was begun to "capture" the Democratic Convention at Chicago. A "Bimetallic National Committee," as it called itself, was formed in a Washington hotel, Mr. Bryan says, which appointed a State Committee in each of thirty-five Southern and Western States and Territories to attend and "capture" the Chicago Convention. They met at the Sherman House in Chicago, immediately before the assembling of the Democratic Convention, and Mr. Bryan said that the silver intrigue must "secure the temporary organization and control the Convention at every step." On that silver committee, outside the Convention, was Mr. Frank Foster of Massachusetts, but neither New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, nor any New England State, excepting Massachusetts, had any part in the conspiracy against Democratic doctrines. The silver cabal won at every point. The National Democratic Committee had very properly, in recognition of his successful leadership and meritorious services, proposed Senator Hill as temporary Chairman; but, in violation of precedent and traditional courtesy, his election was resisted and defeated. The outsiders led by Bryan accomplished the admission of contested delegates, of whom Mr. Bryan was one, who had been refused admission by the Democratic National Committee.

In this way and by other expedients, they captured two-thirds of the Convention. The captors were able to defeat the minority platform, which concisely, clearly and accurately set forth the financial and currency measures which the voters commended in 1896, and again last November. Meanwhile, and as recently as

February, 1896, Mr. Bryan announced (page 124) that he "would not support for the Presidency an advocate of the gold standard," and set forth at much length the political ethics which justified him, as he says, in participating in a Democratic convention, and then "bolting" out of it when he could not succeed in discarding Democratic doctrines.

Mr. Bryan seems to imagine that Democrats are getting together to do to him and his Republican and Populistic allies what he and they did to the American Democracy in 1896. At Chicago, a few nights ago, he was reported as having said:

"Reorganization is an internal remedy and it cannot be applied externally. Those who are within the party lines have a right to a voice in the making of the platform and are entitled to make such change in the organization, or machinery, of the party as they please, but honesty and good faith require that any desired change shall be openly proposed and fairly presented."

Those are the veriest commonplaces, the truth of which all Democrats will concede; but in 1896 the furtive conspirators did not proceed as "honesty and good faith require." The methods by which Bryan, Croker and their allies dictated at Kansas City a reaffirmation of the Chicago platform repugnant to a majority of the Convention, are well known. Mr. Bryan deems a voter not to be a Democrat unless his vote was cast for him in 1896, or 1900. How was it with those Democrats who did not vote for Breckenridge, or Douglas, in 1860, although sound Democrats before and after? How was it with those, previously Democrats, who voted against Cass in 1848, but for Pierce in 1852? Was not John Van Buren, the first President of the Manhattan Club, a Democrat, even although he did not vote for Cass? Were not those Democrats who refused to vote for Cass in 1848, among the "wheel horses" for Pierce in 1852, and were not those Democrats who could not stomach Greeley in 1872 among the most efficient for Tilden in 1876?

The American Democracy is not "cabined, cribbed, confined" by votes for Bryan or confidence only in Bryan. It is "broad and general as the casing air." Although Tilden had received the votes of a majority of the Presidential electors duly chosen and therefore was President *de jure*, he did not by speeches and through a newspaper solicit a renomination. But when, in the course of time, he indicated his preference for Cleveland, the Democracy approved his choice and the people ratified it. His

suggestion of Manning for Secretary of the Treasury was adopted by the President, and approved by the country. Manning, in the grasp of a mortal illness, tendering his resignation to the President, told him, with a clear perception of the Republican silver dollar peril, that "the country is plunging along a miry road to foreseen disaster," "foreseen," at least, by Manning. The disaster came.

IV.

Notwithstanding the counting out of Tilden and counting in of Hayes by the Electoral Commission, leaving the *de jure* President out of the executive office, the Democracy fairly prospered until the second term of Cleveland, when calamities—generated by Republican greenbacks to be redeemed, and Republican silver dollars whose coinage had to be stopped—burst over the country, accompanied by world-wide financial and industrial depression, followed by annual Federal deficits from 1894 to 1899 inclusive. The tariff legislation of Cleveland's second term encountered, as we can now see, difficulties and perils not then understood. Industrial depression was doing its devastating work. The deficit had to be dealt with and changed into a surplus. The wisest were at a loss to know which, among the many proposed, would be the most feasible remedy. Before the President's annual message in December, 1893, the Ways and Means Committee of the House had prepared a tariff bill which Cleveland commended to Congress. He expressed the opinion that "a small tax upon incomes derived from certain corporate investments" had been wisely embraced in the plan. That income-tax was put in the Wilson bill by Bryan and two others, who composed a sub-committee of the Ways and Means Committee. The Secretary of the Treasury took a similar view and alluded to investments of railroads as under-taxed, although the managers of such enterprises looked upon them as over-taxed, in comparison with other property. The sum required from the income-tax was not declared and apportioned among the several States, and the Supreme Court was constrained to decide it to be unconstitutional. The unprecedented obstacles arising in the Senate out of claims, rivalries, diversified and conflicting tariff interests in the enormous area of the United States, prejudiced the new law before it had taken its place on the statute book.

The remedies presented by Bryanism in 1896 when industrial depression, in the United States and in Europe, was near its end—remedies taken over by the Chicago Democratic Convention of 1896 from the Populist and Silver Republican Conventions—were so repugnant to American Democracy, that the Republican leaders were enabled to foist upon the nation an executive and a Congress, which, by the Dingley tariff, carried protective customs taxes on many articles to the highest point, as if out of mere spite against foreigners. That action started in Europe a war of retaliation against the United States, which the Republican leaders profess to be able to mitigate by reciprocity makeshifts in the form of tariff treaties.

It is impossible to think of customs taxes which will not bring in revenue, and it is also impossible to raise two hundred millions annually by a tariff, and not thereby give subsidies to domestic manufacturers of articles similar to the duty-paying foreign products. However praiseworthy may have been such subsidies for military or other purposes in the early history of the government, it is very different when the subsidies paid by customs taxes enable or compel those who obtain them to sell their surplus in foreign countries at lower prices than to our own people. The Supreme Court, when in *McCullough's* case it declared, by the pen of Marshall, that Congress had an implied power to create "the bank," also declared it had an implied power to "promote the common defense and general welfare" by protecting our manufactures from injurious foreign competition; but the Chicago Democratic Convention of 1892 denounced as unconstitutional a tariff for any other purpose than revenue. The Chicago platform of four years afterward affirmed "that the tariff duties should be levied for purposes of revenue" (omitting "only"), and said nothing of the unconstitutionality of protective rates and schedules. The coinage and currency question so absorbed the voters that the tariff agitation disappeared. In a recent article, however, a Secretary of the Reciprocity Commission at Washington working under the fourth and other sections of the Dingley tariff law, exposes, with a simplicity unexampled in modern partisan literature, "the feeling of exasperation and resentment throughout the commercial world" aroused by that tariff. The intention of its framers was, he said, to put rates high, "in order to permit reciprocal concessions" by the Execu-

tive. He publishes a list of reciprocity treaties which the Senate and Congress have not ratified. He then makes the prediction that, if the reciprocity contrivances should fail, retaliations against the United States, on account of the monstrous Dingley tariff, "will restrict all foreign trade, entrain endless embarrassments and engender unfriendly feeling between the nations involved." Senator Lodge was reported as arguing the other day in the Senate that there was urgency for the Army bill because Europe may threaten by force our increasing export trade. He mentioned the beginning of a European federation against it, but he did not assign as the cause the subsidies offered by the Dingley tariff, which constituted an invitation to European retaliation. The Bryan Chicago platform declared that there must not be "changes in our tariff laws," excepting to cure deficits, "until the money question is settled." Has it been settled?

Be that as it may, the tariff question will be profoundly affected by the interpretation which, in the cases pending before it, the Supreme Court shall give to the phrase of the Constitution "throughout the United States."

Since the publication of two papers on the subject in the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* for December, 1899, and March, 1900, I have not seen any reason to doubt what the final judgment of the Supreme Court will be regarding the theories of the Constitution upon which the McKinley administration and the Republican Congress have based their government of our new islands since the Treaty of Peace. Those theories the Attorney-General has recently exploited before that tribunal.

A review of the political events of the century just now completed, discloses the fact that, during all the period, the American Democracy has struggled to maintain intact the partition of sovereignty between the people of the States in whom all sovereignty resides, the State governments that the people created, and the government of the United States. That government the people of the United States, acting as States, afterward established by taking from the States a portion of the sovereignty they held, and conferring it on the new government now at Washington. The Democracy has endeavored to concede to that new government at Washington all the "implied powers," fixed and required under the Constitution, by interpreting the grant of those powers not too strictly and rigorously, but fairly and justly. During

nearly all the first sixty years of the last century, the executive department of the Federal Government was in the hands of the Democracy, inasmuch as the administrations of John Quincy Adams, Harrison and Tyler were brief episodes. The three amendments of the Constitution resulting from the war of secession have, in Democratic opinion, only diminished a few of the pre-existing powers of each of the several States, and have not in any sense modified the old Democratic rules for interpreting the grant of powers. Excepting the very few rights of sovereignty taken away by those three amendments and given to the Washington government, its limitations and State Rights exist as before. That has a distinct bearing on the future of the Democratic party, inasmuch as many of the modifications in the laws of our country demanded by Bryan and the Populists cannot be constitutionally made by Congress, but, if they are to be made at all, are for the people of the several States to consider and enact, under their reserved powers in the partition of sovereignty originally made by the people.

V.

The failure on the part of those signing the recent Spanish treaty to keep in mind those century-old tenets of the American Democracy, has precipitated upon the Supreme Court the pending questions growing out of that treaty, and has thrown into confusion and perplexity the President, the Senate, our foreign and domestic affairs. It must have been that our American negotiators at Paris considered and decided, before signing the treaty, how our new Islands were to be governed. President McKinley and the Republican leaders have since been executing the theories of that decision regarding the meaning of the phrase "throughout the United States."

There are those who say that the ratification of that treaty has, in some way, taken the United States out of what they describe as a "century of isolation," made them a "world-wide power," compelled a new kind of diplomacy, and novel participation in the affairs of other nations. But has the Federal Constitution been thereby changed? Has the Government of the United States ceased to be one whose sovereignty is limited? Have the executive and legislative powers been thereby enlarged? Those are the questions now pending before the Supreme Court.

Must not our Constitution be modified, before the President of the United States can enter into "world-wide" affairs on a par with European Kings, Queens and Emperors, who (which the United States government has not) have full sovereign powers unrestrained by a written fundamental law. Armies and navies can be moved as such sovereigns please, and treaties can be made as they have a fancy to make them, whether public or secret.

President McKinley, under the inspiration of "world-wide power," invades China, without specific authority of Congress, with an army of five or six thousand, and enters into stipulations with Europeans regarding the internal affairs of China. Some of the features of the President's pending negotiations with foreign powers at Pekin regarding future Chinese autonomy, should show whither "world-wide power" is going, and how far the McKinley Administration has departed from the traditions of the Department of State under its former chiefs. But it will be a strange commentary on "world-wide power," if it shall after all turn out that the Administration has recently had no real influence on Chinese affairs.

VI.

Is the government departing in many ways from the well considered diplomacy and negotiations, when Caleb Cushing concluded our first treaty with China, and our first treaty with Japan was made by Commodore Perry, both ratified under Democratic administrations?

And then what is to be thought of that which has recently gone on between Washington and London regarding the Isthmian canal? Did the Executive, following good American traditions in such important matters, confer with his party friends in Congress, before he made such definite pledges to England by the Hay-Pauncefote settlement? Is the whole affair to be taken as an expression of the President's conviction that, in order to be a "world-wide power," the President must have the treaty making power in his hands as European sovereigns have it? Must the Senate, representing in such matters the several States whose rights may be infringed by a treaty, accept whatever the President may choose to send to it?

The American Democracy condemns imitation in the New World of the faults of the Old, intrusion into spheres of influence abroad where it has no call to go, seeking an over-sea empire, com-

mitting the war power to the Executive unless when sudden assault is to be repelled, the establishment of a great standing army forbidden by the nature and purposes of our government, hostile to the prejudices of Americans, as shown by the clause of the Constitution preventing a permanent appropriation therefor. The great material prosperity which has come, and is coming, to the United States from their independent isolation will, by the inevitable rivalries of increasing American production, trade, and the power of enormous wealth and capital, create enough resentment without our taking part in international political and dynastic ambitions in Europe. The American Democracy has in mind the wisdom of John Bright when he said :

"There never was a time since the beginning of history when there was not one, or more than one, State which conceived itself either so numerous, or so well situated, or so rich, or so ingenious, or so united, or so martial, or so pious, or so favored by Heaven, or so pre-eminent for some other great quality, that it might safely defy all the rest of the world, set up its own rules, be its own law, and entertain schemes incompatible with the peace of the world."

The American Democracy is now confronted by two opponents hostile to one another, but each finding Democracy in its path. One is the Republican party, or a portion of it, tearing up the Constitution in pursuit of what it describes as "world-wide power." The other is the organization of the Populists, trampling under foot the Constitution, in pursuit of objects over a greater part of which Congress has no jurisdiction. If there are evils infesting our national, State and municipal affairs, such as Mr. Edmunds has recently described, and if they have largely come upon us since we departed from that independent isolation which gave the United States abounding freedom, wealth and real international power, since the wars of "aggression" by our armies have been entered upon, and since trade wars by subsidies are being waged for "world-wide power," how is Washington to be purged of those evils, unless by political purification beginning in the towns, cities and capitals of each of the several States? The constant problem to be solved, the never-ending temptation to be resisted, arises from the perpetual need of wise restraint and guidance of Federal powers exercised by the government at Washington, but amid all the perils and solicitudes of the present the Democracy does not despair of the future or of the Republic.

PERRY BELMONT.